

Sūrah 67

Al-Mulk

(Dominion)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The expression *al-mulk* (dominion) featuring in the opening verse of this *Sūrah* constitutes its title.

Period of Revelation

There is no authentic report about the period of its revelation. However, it is fairly evident from its contents and style that it was revealed in the early Makkan phase.

Subject Matter and Themes

On the one hand, this *Sūrah* introduces in a concise manner the teachings of Islam and on the other, it eloquently warns those who were steeped in heedlessness. It is a feature of the early Makkan *Sūrahs* that they deal with the entire teachings of Islamic faith and the purpose of the Prophet Muḥammad's mission, albeit stated briefly, not at length. This is done with a view to persuading the

addressees in a way that they grasp these truths gradually. The focus, however, is on waking up the heedless, on prompting them to ponder, and on arousing their dormant conscience.

The opening five verses aim at making man realise that the universe inhabited by him represents a well-organised and stable kingdom. Were one to look, he could not detect any flaw or shortcoming in its working. It is God Who has brought it into existence out of nothing, and it is He Who exercises absolute power and authority over its functioning and control. His power is boundless. Man is also told that he has not been created in such a well organised system in vain. He has been sent to this world on a test and trial. His good conduct alone will help him pass this test.

Verses 6–11 graphically describe the dreadful consequences of unbelief which man will face in the Hereafter. Mankind is informed that God has sent down His Messengers to warn them in this world against such consequences. If they do not listen to the Messengers and do not mend their ways, they will have to concede in the Hereafter that they really deserve the punishment which will be meted out to them.

Verses 12–14 emphasise the truth that God, being the Creator, is not unaware of the condition of His creatures. He knows very well all that man declares and conceals, including the thoughts and innermost feelings of his mind and heart. Therefore, the first and foremost moral principle is that man should shun all evil out of the fear of the Unseen God; no matter whether he may be caught or not for his evil deed by any authority in this world and whether he may or may not have any fear of loss in this world. Those who adopt such a conduct in this world will attain deliverance and a great reward in the Hereafter.

Verses 15–23 draw attention to the signs which mankind disregards as routine matters. Man is asked to reflect on these signs seriously. It is said that you look at the earth on which you walk routinely in comfort and from which you derive your livelihood; it is God Who has made the earth subservient to you, otherwise, you may be struck by an earthquake which may destroy you, or a violent storm which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds flying above you, it is God Who holds them in the air. Look at the resources you have mobilised and accumulated on the earth. No

one can save you if God were to afflict you with His punishment. Nor can anyone restore the means of sustenance for you if God takes these away. All these signs should suffice for you to realise the truth. However, you look at these signs like the unthinking animals who cannot draw any inference from their observations. You do not properly utilise your faculties of hearing, seeing, and discernment with which God has endowed you as a human being. As a result, you fail to see the right path.

Verses 24–27 explain that man will ultimately stand before his Lord. It is not a Messenger's assignment to inform you of the exact time and date of the Resurrection. His only duty is to warn you beforehand about its occurrence. You refuse to believe in the Messenger and insist on witnessing the Last Day of Resurrection in front of you. But when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will be astounded. On that Day, you will be told that this is exactly what you asked to be expedited.

Verses 28–29 refute the Makkan disbelievers' allegations against the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions. They used to curse the Prophet (peace be upon him) and pray for his and the believers' destruction. In response, it is stressed that whether the people who are calling them to the right way are punished or rewarded, how will this affect their destiny? They should better think as to who will protect them from the scourge of God. They consider those who believe in God and have trust in Him as misguided. Soon they will come to know who, in reality, is misguided.

Finally, they are asked to ponder over the question that if water, on which their lives depend in the deserts and hills of Arabia, were to sink down into the depths of the earth and vanish, who other than God can restore this lifeline to them?